

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly substitute the following set of amended claims for the original set of claims.

1. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~ A method of packaging one or more products in suspension in a thermoformed shell tray, ~~characterized in that it consists in comprising:~~

producing a stand-alone subassembly (~~SE~~) incorporating a support frame (~~5~~), accommodating a stretch film (~~6~~), said film allowing one or more products (~~1~~) to be suspended, and a lid (~~3~~) positioned over said support frame and bearing, by means of ~~it's~~ a lower surface, in a point-like manner on the ~~product~~ one or more products centered on said film, and ~~in that~~

positioning said subassembly ~~is positioned~~ on a thermoformed tray accommodating, on its one upper tray face, a closure in the form of a closure film for purposes of sealing.

2. (Currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1 of packaging one or more products in suspension in a tray , wherein:

the tray is in the form of a thermoformed shell, ~~characterized in that it implements the following phases:~~

a thermoformed support frame (~~5~~) which is open at its center (~~5.a~~) is used in order to position a stretch plastic film (~~6~~), the film bearing on ~~the~~ an upper peripheral border (~~5.a~~) of the frame, ~~thereby and~~ being fastened to the ~~latter~~ border,

said support frame is positioned on a matrix (~~8~~) having enough depth to allow ~~the~~ downward deformation of the film by means of ~~the~~ action of an evacuating source, evacuation is carried out dragging the film downward with deformation by stretching,

the ~~product~~ one or more products (~~1~~) to be packaged are positioned on the stretch film (~~6~~) and a vertical bearing and pressing ~~effect~~ force is exerted by a means (~~9~~) coming into contact with the ~~product~~ one or more products,

all or part of the evacuating operation is stopped, allowing ~~the~~ a partial rise of the stretch film while at the same time bearing and pressing on the one ~~product~~ or more products, allowing partial retraction of the stretch film in order to ensure said ~~product~~ one

or more products are covered by the film beyond ~~its or their~~ a widest part of the one or more products,

the vertical pressing force is stopped, allowing the stretch film and the ~~product~~ one or more products to rise and additional covering of the one or more products latter, whereby the ~~product~~ one or more products ~~being~~ are suspended,

the lid (3) is positioned on the support frame, thereby bearing on ~~the~~ an upper plane of the ~~product~~ one or more products,

the support frame with the film and the ~~product~~ one or more products constituting the subassembly (SE) are transferred to a tray forming a thermoformed shell of the packaging and the closure film is deposited on the upper face of the tray.

3. (Currently amended) Packaging for a product suspended on a stretch film, said film being secured to ~~the~~ a peripheral edge of ~~the~~ a shell-shaped tray of the packaging, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising:

at least one tray in the form of a thermoformed shell (2) having a flat and horizontal inner peripheral flange, internally allowing ~~the~~ positioning of a stand-alone subassembly (SE) including a profiled support frame (5) which is open in its center (5-e) on which a stretch and shrink film (6) is positioned, fastened to said support frame and allowing ~~at least one product (1)~~ one or more products to be suspended, said stretch and shrink film surrounding the ~~product~~ one or more products beyond ~~their~~ a widest region of said one or more products, said subassembly including a lid (3) placed on its lower face in order to accommodate a packing (3-b) capable of bearing, without damage, on ~~the~~ an upper part of the ~~product~~ one or more products (1).

4. (Currently amended) Packaging according to Claim 3, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising several shell-shaped trays (2-4) shaped to match said stepped bearing regions and to be positioned one in the other depending on ~~the~~ level of fragility of the ~~product~~ one or more products contained in said packaging, and ~~in that the~~ wherein a lower tray accommodates the subassembly (SE) for suspending the ~~product~~ one or more products.

5. (Currently amended) Packaging according to ~~either of Claims 3 and~~ Claim 4, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein an upper face of the ~~tray or~~ trays accommodates a closure and sealing film (10-11), and ~~in that the~~ wherein an upper face of the lid is in a plane below the upper plane of said trays.

6. (Currently amended) Packaging according to any one of ~~the preceding~~ claims 3-5, or obtained according to the method of Claims 1 or and 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the stretch film (6) is made of polyurethane, or polyethylene ~~or the like~~.

7. (Currently amended) Packaging according to any one of ~~the preceding~~ claims 3-5, or obtained according to the method of Claims 1 or 2, ~~characterized in its application to packaging~~ wherein said one or more products comprise medical prostheses.

In the Abstract:

Kindly amend the existing Abstract as follows:

ABSTRACT

**METHOD OF PACKAGING VARIOUS PRODUCTS IN SUSPENSION AND THE
PACKAGES OBTAINED**

The A method of packaging one or more products in suspension in a thermoformed shell ~~is noteworthy in that it consists in~~ includes producing a stand-alone subassembly (SE) incorporating a support frame (5), accommodating a stretch film (6), ~~said~~ . The film ~~allowing~~ allows one or more products (1) to be suspended, and a lid (3) is positioned over said support frame and ~~bearing~~ bears, by means of its lower surface in a point-like manner on the ~~product~~ one or more products centered on said film, ~~and in that said~~ . The subassembly is positioned on a thermoformed tray accommodating, on its upper face, a closure in the form of a film for purposes of sealing. The invention aims to provide packages obtained according to the method. The applications are diverse and varied and ~~in particular in [sic]~~ include the packaging of medical prostheses.

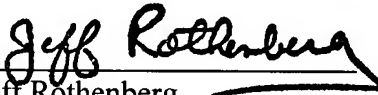
Reference: ~~FIGURE 1~~

REMARKS

By this Preliminary Amendment, the pending claims are being amended to delete reference numbers and otherwise better conform with U.S. practice. The Abstract is being amended similarly.

Favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeff Rothenberg
Reg. No. 26,429
Attorney for Applicant

Dated: Aug. 1, 2003

Heslin Rothenberg Farley & Mesiti P.C.
5 Columbia Circle
Albany, New York 12203
Tel: 518-452-5600
Fax: 518-452-5579
E-mail: jr@hrfmlaw.com